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SUBJECT The Resignation of Admiral Inman

BOB EDWARDS: The number two man in the Central Intelligence Agency has submitted his resignation. The Agency's Deputy Director, Admiral Bobby Ray Inman, told President Reagan of his decision a month ago, and yesterday the President accepted that resignation with deep regret.

NPR's Alan Burlow has this report.

ALAN BURLOW: Inman was one of the most highly respected and trusted intelligence officers in the country. He is the man many congressmen, senators, and intelligence professionals hoped would be appointed CIA Director when President Reagan took office. He is also the man many hoped would replace CIA Director William Casey when he came under fire from the Senate Intelligence Committee last year.

Even during Casey's own confirmation hearings, Bobby Inman emerged as everybody's favorite spy. Senator Barry Goldwater urged Casey to hire Inman as his deputy, and others, including Joseph Biden, joined the chorus of praise for Inman.

SENATOR JOSEPH BIDEN: Unquestionably the absolute best person in every respect that has ever testified before this committee is Admiral Inman. In my opinion, he's the single most competent man that exists in the entire United States of America regarding the intelligence community. He is super, super competent, forthcoming, honest, and very, very, very, very good.

BURLOW: So why is Inman leaving? Inman says he accepted the job of Deputy CIA Director to help rebuild the Agency but that he accepted it reluctantly. Inman did not want to leave the National Security Agency, which he headed, to take the number two job at CIA.

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